

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SAM-01 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /087 W

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R 280935Z MAY 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3606
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT AO
SUBJECT: HIGH COMMISSIONER IN TROUBLE BUT NOT OUT

1. MPLA'S POLITICAL BUREAU IN LUANDA PUBLISHED A COMMUNIQUE MAY 23 ACCUSING GENERAL SILVA CARDOSO, THE PORTUGUESE HIGH COMMISSIONER IN ANGOLA, OF PARTIALITY TO OTHER LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, INEFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP AND HOSTILITY TO MPLA. MPLA SAID IT HAD LOST CONFIDENCE IN THE HIGH COMMISSIONER BUT STOPPED JUST SHORT OF CALLING FOR HIS DISMISSAL.

2. MPLA'S LABOR GROUPING, UNTA (NATIONAL UNION OF ANGOLAN WORKERS), WAS NOT SO TIMID. ONE OF ITS 18 DEMANDS PRESENTED TO THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT ON MAY 22 (SEPTEL) CALLED FOR THE DISMISSAL OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER BECAUSE OF HIS RECENT STATEMENTS TO "EXPRESSO" IN LISBON BLAMING MPLA FOR LUANDA'S VIOLENCE.

3. THE COUNCIL OF THE REVOLUTION, THE EXECUTIVE ARM OF THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT IN PORTUGAL, RELEASED A COMMUNIQUE THAT WAS PUBLISHED HERE ON MAY 23 WHICH ANALYZED THE SITUATION IN ANGOLA

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AND REITERATED THE AFM'S SUPPORT FOR THE PORTUGUESE ARMED FORCES

IN ANGOLA. THE LENGTHY STATEMENT NEVER MENTIONED THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AND ONLY OBLIQUELY LAUDED THE STEPS TAKEN BY THE ANGOLAN DEFENSE COUNCIL (HEADED BY CARDOSO) TO RESTORE ORDER. GIVEN THE RECENT MPLA ATTACKS ON THE HIGH COMMISSIONER, THIS LAPSE MUST BE SEEN AS A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN HIM ON THE PART OF THE COUNCIL. (IT ALSO SAYS THE OBVIOUS ABOUT WHICH IS THE COUNCIL'S FAVORITE ANGOLAN LIBERATION GROUP.)

4. GEN CARDOSO'S ONLY SUPPORT NOW COMES FROM FNLA AND UNITA. (FNLA ISSUED A COMMUNIQUE ON MAY 23 PRAISING HIM FOR HIS NEUTRALITY.) BOTH MOVEMENTS HAVE RECENTLY TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT THEY CONTINUE TO BACK THE HIGH COMMISSIONER AND WILL NOT PERMIT HIM TO BE REMOVED.

5. COMMENT: CARDOSO HAS DONE AN ACCEPTABLE JOB OF BEING IMPARTIAL AND HE HAS HAD SOME RECENT SUCCESS IN IMPROVING THE SECURITY SITUATION IN LUANDA. HOWEVER HIS ACCURATE PUBLIC DENUNCIATION OF MPLA AND NETO FOR ARMING THE MASSES, WHILE LONG OVERDUE, WAS A POLITICAL BLUNDER AND HAS GIVEN MPLA A PLAUSIBLE EXCUSE TO CALL FOR HIS HEAD. REMOVING CARDOSO, HOWEVER, WILL NOT BE EASY. FNLA AND UNITA WILL RESIST STRONGLY ANY ATTEMPT TO REPLACE HIM. (HOWEVER, JUST HOW STRONGLY THEY CAN AND WOULD RESIST IS UNCLEAR.) MOREOVER IT WOULD BE NEAR TO IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND A SINGLE CANDIDATE ACCEPTABLE TO ALL THREE GROUPS. IN THIS SITUATION THE ACCEPTANCE OF A REPLACEMENT BY MPLA IMPLIES AN ALMOST CERTAIN REJECTION BY FNLA AND CONVERSELY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TENURE OF OFFICE, POLITICAL LEADERS, LIBERATION FRONTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, LABOR UNIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 MAY 1975
Decapton Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decapton Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975LUANDA00655
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750186-0129
From: LUANDA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750514/aaaaamaq.tel
Line Count: 88
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <11 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGH COMMISSIONER IN TROUBLE BUT NOT OUT
TAGS: PINT, AO, MPLA, (CARDOSO, SILVA)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006